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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 001227

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SUBJECT: COMMISSION ON TRUTH AND FRIENDSHIP SESSION II  
HEARINGS

REF: JAKARTA 908

Classified By: PolCouns Marc L. Desjardins, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: The last two days of Session II (March 26-30) of the Commission of Truth and Friendship Indonesia-Timore Leste was a continued study in contrasts. Prominent Indonesian Generals, active and retired, postulated a description of events that at times almost seemed to mock the intent of the Commission. They systematically denied any wrongdoing and portrayed themselves as victims of the UN. Indonesian Commissioners tended to ask questions seeking to buttress their position. East Timorese commissioners sought explanations on how incidents could have occurred given the claims of good behavior by security forces. Lesser Indonesian officials also testified and did not say anything surprising, denying any ties to the actions by various militias. Four victims spoke of the personal tragedies that they faced or witnessed, but could not speak directly to the larger issue of responsibility for events. An official of the commission told us privately that the public presentations by the generals differed to a great extent to the answers they gave commissioners in private. Session III will take place again in Jakarta from May 2-5. End Summary

Major General Suhartono Suratman

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¶2. (SBU) In a presentation that bordered at times on the comical, Suhartono emphasized three major themes: a history of various meetings and agreements that occurred in 1999 and his duty to adjust to new realities and provide security; killings by East Timorese rebels of innocent civilians such as doctors and engineers; and lastly how great a commander he was, as measured by the number of dignitaries and local leaders he received or visited while in East Timor, which he displayed in a lengthy slide presentation. Suhartono had aides distribute copies of a book he wrote to the audience and had a cheering section present.

¶3. (SBU) Suhartono stated that his actions as military commander in East Timor where in accordance with accepting the new realities that were transpiring in East Timor in 1999. He stated that the security forces attempted to encourage dialogue and provide security for the implementation of several peace agreements that were signed in the course of that year. He cited the presence of one East Timorese commissioner at some of those talks. He said that agreements to lay down arms were not respected and criticized the UNAMET commander for not being neutral.

¶4. (SBU) After showing pictures of a number of incidents

involving civilians that he said were killed by rebels, Suhartono then showed a lengthy series of pictures of meetings with foreign personalities, involvement in good works or on visit to various local institutions. The display was an attempt to illustrate his benevolent attitude and he discussed his wife's charitable activities at length.

Suhartono claimed that they always had the East Timorese people's welfare first in their mind as did his forces. He criticized then rebel leader Xanana Gusmao for escalating violence in April 1999 through a call for an uprising. He stated that while integrationist forces had turned in their weapons in accordance with agreements, independence forces had not and that the military was hamstrung because it was confined to barracks in the period leading to the referendum.

¶5. (SBU) Questions by the Indonesian commissioners brought forward statements that Suhartono left East Timor two weeks before the referendum, that the Indonesian military had no security role from May 1999 because it had adopted a "neutral" position between pro-independence and pro-integration forces, that the police was responsible for security and that TNI forces were decreased from 10 to 3 battalions in the course of the summer. East Timorese commissioners' attempts to seek information on the source of weapons for the pro-integration militias and statements that the militias were composed of military personnel resulted in a flat denial by Suhartono of any military involvement. Other questions about specific incidents led to denials of TNI wrongdoing and a flat assertion by Suhartono that all his personnel were trained in human rights and carried human rights booklets with them. He added that any violations were punished in accordance with law but asserted that there were not many. He said that from May 1999, his soldiers were not

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permitted to carry weapons outside their barracks. The authorities thought the police and UNAMET would be able to provide adequate security. He criticized UNAMET for not understanding the situation well enough.

Major General (retired) Adam Damiri

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¶6. (SBU) Damiri, whose command included multiple islands besides Timor, made a more coherent and focused presentation than Suhartono. Emphasizing the history of events as he saw them from 1975 onward, he repeated many themes enunciated by other GOI officials. He talked of continued violence from 1975 onwards, that one group punishing another with violence was part of the local culture, pointing to current instability in East Timor. He specifically called charges of forced displacement an allegation. He asserted that pro-independence forces caused the unrest because they were attacking the nation's integrity and that Indonesian forces were most concerned with protecting civilians from Fretilin. He stated that in 1999 Fretilin activities had the effect of causing a mass exodus and destroyed much GOI-provided health and education infrastructure. He said that many organizations organized by the government said to be militias were not so, but similar to neighborhood watch groups that exist to this day in all parts of Indonesia.

¶7. (SBU) Damiri stated that when a ceasefire was negotiated between the various forces in mid-1999, only pro-integration forces handed over weapons, 435 guns, while pro-independence handed over none. He criticized the UNAMET chief for having failed to collect any. TNI's neutrality restricted its right to patrol yet it had to supply UNAMET with numerous resources, he stated. As had other military witnesses, he alleged that foreign planes were doing night operations at the time. Damiri criticized UNAMET for not using the resources of the local election commission to better organize the vote and for recruiting only pro-independence staff. He said that UNAMET was biased towards independence and did nothing about cheating during the vote and did not follow-up Indonesian complaints. Despite this, Damiri asserted that

Indonesia had met its responsibility by assuring a peaceful voting day.

¶18. (SBU) Damiri stated that the subsequent violence was sporadic and everywhere. He claimed that integrationists were disappointed by UNAMET cheating and that in their euphoria, the winners behaved in an "exaggerated" way. He cited the early announcement of the results as an important factor as well. Damiri said that he never instructed Indonesian forces to support autonomy (i.e. integration) during the course of 1999. He specifically denied the issuance of weapons by the TNI to militia forces, noting that most weapons available in armories had been shipped to Java. In answer to questions, Damiri provided long lists of actions he said his forces took to protect people during the violence that followed the referendum. Prompted by an Indonesian Commissioner's question, he agreed with the possibility that Indonesia had been the victim of a conspiracy, naming Australia in particular. Damiri claimed that the referendum should have shown 60 percent support for integration, based on voter participation in the Indonesian parliamentary elections earlier in the year.

¶19. (SBU) The questioning of Damiri exhibited moments of tension and others of close familiarity. Indonesian Commissioner Achmad Ali at one point was so forward leaning in agreeing with Damiri's comments that the East Timorese co-chair soon after made a statement to remind commissioners that they were not supposed to come to any conclusions at that time. At another point, Damiri noted that East Timorese Commissioner Felicidade de Sousa Guteeres had told him that she had been once in a position to kill him when she was a fighter in the bush. She smiled and nodded in acknowledgement. He then noted that another commissioner, Isabel Ferreira, wife of the current head of the East Timorese military, knew Damiri and his wife well. In fact, after the testimony Ferreira came down into the audience to chat with Damiri's wife.

#### Victim Witnesses

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¶10. (SBU) During the last two days of testimony, there were several victim witnesses. One woman was a victim of multiple

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rapes by militia members who was then kidnapped and taken to the border with West Timor. After much more abuse, the victim managed to run away. The witness was a person of simple background who had trouble telling her story in the imposing milieu of a hotel ballroom.

¶11. (SBU) Another victim was a male who had left the military and had been attacked by militia for being an independence supporter. Seriously wounded by a knife attack, the TNI prevented him from being killed. A separate victim described an attack by militia members on the Maliana Police station in which three local parliamentarians died. Questioning established that the witness could not specifically establish the identities of the attackers and that the attack occurred because the police did not take action to impeded such attacks and protect victims.

¶12. (SBU) A witness who was an aide to a priest testified to the killings during the Suai Church attack, saying that he himself had counted fifty bodies. Refugees had gathered in the church due to threats they had received before they were killed by militia.

#### Former Mayor of Dili

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¶13. (SBU) Also testifying was Mateus Maia, former Mayor of Dili from 1996-99. He spent much of his time explaining the difference between the militia groups and government established civilian security brigades. He claimed that the

population often confused the two groups. He said that the government group was composed of East Timorese both for and against independence whereas the militia groups were private pro-independence forces. He described the incident in which local notable Manuel Carrascalao was killed as resulting from pro-integrationists who were disappointed that Carrascalao had switched sides.

¶14. (C) Comment: There was a slight uptick in the tension in the sessions during the last two days, notably when Suhartono and Damiri testified. Truth has thus far does not always seem to be the winner in the sessions. In fact, an official closely familiar with the Commission's work said that Suhartono and Damiri were much more frank in private preparatory discussions. The next session runs from May 2-5 and includes such prominent witnesses as General Wiranto and then Colonel (now Major General) Noer Muis. End Comment  
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